

# Entrepreneurs Turn Productivity Journal Into an International Business

BestSelf Co. keeps entrepreneurs on track for success with the help of PayPal and Shopify



## Company

BestSelf Co.

## Founders

Cathryn Lavery  
Allen Brouwer

## Industry

Retail

## Website

bestself.co

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## Challenges At-A-Glance

- Setting up a custom online store quickly
- Handling international demand as an unknown brand
- Streamlining payments for affiliates and remote staff members
- Managing the day-to-day tasks of running a business with a limited staff

## Company Snapshot

Cathryn Lavery and Allen Brouwer aren't your typical pair of twenty-somethings. They started a business at a young age and created a journal to help them prioritize what mattered to drive their business forward. This personal productivity journal piqued the interest of a few of friends, so much so that Cathryn and Allen decided to devote all their time and energy into developing a consumer version of their journal.

The pair turned to Kickstarter to validate their journaling product on a wider scale. Not only were Cathryn and Allen able to generate funding through Kickstarter, but they also gathered important product feedback and grew considerable demand before their official launch. What started as a passion project turned into a successful international business selling to over 20,000 customers and serving entrepreneurs and business owners just like them.

## The Challenge

Cathryn and Allen wanted to build on the momentum generated from Kickstarter and reach their growing audience of customers. This meant they needed to set up a highly customized online store quickly and tailor its checkout options to meet the payment requirements of both domestic and international customers.

As sales increased, BestSelf's two founders encountered new challenges. Cathryn and Allen had several online advocates who became promotional affiliates, but tracking their sales and getting them paid had to be simpler. BestSelf also added remote staff, and managing payroll was a new hurdle for the young company. Cathryn and Allen found themselves shouldering myriad responsibilities of leading a growing product company, such as sourcing shipping containers and warehouses, managing a growing staff, and fielding requests for payment options not in their checkout process. Their products were a hit, but Cathryn and Allen were feeling as though the day-to-day tasks of running the business were taking over their productivity and progress.

“PayPal is a global brand. Customers see the logo as a trust symbol on our site, which helps alleviate any concerns they have before they buy.”

– CATHRYN LAVERY  
Co-Founder, BestSelf Co.



## Results: Shopify + PayPal

- Company tripled in size
- Sold to more than 20,000 customers
- Shipped to 81 countries
- Won Shopify’s Build a Business Competition

## About PayPal

With 188 million active customer accounts, we have created an open and secure payments ecosystem that people and businesses choose to securely transact with each other online, in stores and on mobile devices. PayPal is a truly global payments platform that is available to people in more than 200 markets, allowing customers to get paid in 100 currencies and growing.

## Solutions

Shopify and PayPal helped simplify BestSelf’s ecommerce presence, alleviating stress and freeing Cathryn and Allen to focus on BestSelf’s expansion and innovation. Shopify offered an all-in-one ecommerce solution they could rapidly deploy, equipping them with a full suite of design templates and checkout features they could easily modify for their business needs. Shopify also allowed BestSelf to use their own designers and developers to customize their shopping experience and differentiate their brand.

Soon after launching the online store, it was apparent BestSelf needed to offer PayPal as a payment solution. Customers emailed Cathryn and Allen daily asking for PayPal as an additional checkout option. It was clear that having PayPal at checkout was essential to their business growth, especially as BestSelf went global.

“People tend to keep their money in their PayPal account just to shop. And they know their account is secure and they can go straight to PayPal if they have any issues,” Allen offered.

The benefits BestSelf realized by using PayPal went beyond the payment processing for their online store. Cathryn and Allen were able to pay staff members with PayPal and also handled their affiliate payments with the click of a button using PayPal’s Mass Payments. This helped simplify day-to-day business operations for Cathryn and Allen, enabling them to focus on the “next big thing” – growing the team, developing more products and expanding the business.

## Conclusion

Within eight months of launching Shopify and PayPal into their business practices, Cathryn and Allen have won Shopify’s Build a Business Competition and grown their business to reach 81 countries and counting. They now have fulfillment centers in the United States and Europe, and will soon open a third center in Australia to keep up with demand. BestSelf has also added six employees and plans to add more so Cathryn and Allen can continue to focus on the bigger vision for their business – and most importantly – staying productive.